

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence

SUBJECT: Comments on OCB Report on U.S. Policy on Antarctica
(NSC 5804/1)

1. These comments on the OCB Report on Antarctica concern the three basic problems: (a) the need for policy review, (b) the need for augmenting US scientific operations, and (c) the budgetary problem of financing US operations.

2. The need for policy review arises, in part, out of a pre-determined limitation on US post-IGY programs defined in par. 21 a. of NSC 5804/1 which calls for "reducing Antarctic activities in the post-IGY period to a minimum to support US interests . . ." The US Navy which pays the largest part of the costs (a 6:1 ratio of logistic to scientific costs) objects to any expansion, and argues that (a) no US expansion is needed, and (b) the NSC policy prevents any expansion from the NSC-approved level (\$17 million) since par. 21 a. calls for a reduction in program costs.

3. The need to augment US operations as stated in the Report is based on an appraisal of the implications of the expanding Soviet effort in the post-IGY period. This is summarized in par. B 6 (63) from Annex A which was initially drafted by the Geography Division, reviewed by WH/DEP, and jointly revised with Ambassador Daniels' office for issuance as a joint CIA-State paper to the Working Group. The intelligence portion of the paper was coordinated with OSI, ONE, ONI, and DES/IEA. Par. B of Annex A, which suggests possible ways to augment US activities, was prepared to reflect the joint thinking of the Geography Division, WH/DEP, and Ambassador Daniels' office. The intelligence appraisal was given in an oral briefing by the undersigned to the OCB. At the OCB consideration of the Report on 14 January 1959, Dr. Waterman spoke to the desirability of expanding the US scientific effort, conceding that the US post-IGY program relative to the Soviets had certain deficiencies, notably in oceanography, glaciological traverses, rocketry, and satellite observations. He also spoke at length on the need for a US mapping program to strengthen US Antarctic research. Karl Harr, noting that the present policy is less than a year old, questioned the adequacy of the case in the Report for a policy review based entirely on the

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concern that the Soviets have a bigger effort than the US. Two basic issues emerged from a subsequent discussion: (a) the question of expanding US Antarctic research at the cost of subtraction of funds from other research programs, and (b) the problem of funding and coordinating Antarctic research under the present absence of a central agency. It was agreed that the first was to be directed to Dr. Killian's Federal Council on Science and Technology for comment, which will be considered when the NSC reviews the Report. The second problem was referred to the Bureau of the Budget for its comment on how funding might be undertaken so as to remove the burden from the US Navy which must divert its ceiling funds from activities having a higher military priority than Antarctica. The BOB has consistently opposed establishment of a new agency for Antarctica, but has never made concrete suggestions on how the funding might otherwise be accomplished.

4. The DCI made two comments in the discussion in response to a direct questioning relating to Soviet motivations, and to the funding problem. He noted that, while the Soviets might not have military motives in their Antarctic activity, value of such activities to technological breakthroughs would be of interest to the Soviets. On the funding question, he agreed that Navy should not have to bear the costs indefinitely, and sooner or later the US will need a separate coordinating and funding agency.

5. Harr's criticism on the weakness of the case for expanded US research appears legitimate, although the significance of Antarctica to the Soviets has been covered in SSIE 11-3-58 (p. 3) and other ORR and OSI reports. For any further emphasis on this question at the NSC Planning Board, the following points might be made:

a. Soviet geophysical and geographic research is motivated by a deep-rooted ideological drive "to make man the true master of nature . . ." (Khrushchev, XXI Party Congress);

b. the polar areas, and particularly Antarctica, represent large gaps in Soviet research on the earth as a whole; and

c. concurrently with its gains from expanding Antarctic research, the Soviets also stand to gain the political advantage of displacing the US as the pre-eminent Antarctic power in a few years in an area where the US has been active for several decades.

6. One immediate challenge confronting the US is the prospect that the Soviets may seize the initiative in the mapping of the

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Antarctic, already proposed by them last August in Moscow. The US representative to the Working Group on Antarctic Cartography, Special Committee on Antarctic Research, to meet 2-6 March 1959 at Canberra, will be unable to present any positive US counter to the Soviet proposal since it has not been possible to develop a US Antarctic mapping program. All US departments deplore this prospect but none are able to assume fiscal initiative to develop and underwrite a program. This is another instance of the funding problem handicapping US programming.

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Enclosure:
OCB Report (NSC 5804/1)

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